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The Coca-Cola Company Commits $2 Billion to Support Planting of 25,000 Acres of New Orange Groves in Florida

Cutrale Citrus Juices and Peace River Citrus Products to plant 12,500 acres each

AUBURNDALE, Fla.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- The future of Florida orange juice is looking brighter today. Coca-Cola is supporting the state's largest citrus planting in 25 years with a commitment to purchase approximately $2 billion of oranges produced by the new groves. Partnering with Cutrale Citrus Juices and Peace River Citrus Products, Coca-Cola's investment will enable the growers to plant 25,000 acres of orange trees.

Through this collaboration Coca-Cola will procure all of the fruit produced by these trees over the next 20 years. According to a 25-year study conducted by the Florida Department of Citrus, this initiative will add more than 4,100 direct and indirect jobs to the state economy.

"Citrus is synonymous with Florida, but the industry has faced many challenges in recent years, particularly the growing threat of citrus greening," said Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Adam Putnam. "With Coca-Cola's generous investment towards supporting 25,000 acres of new orange groves in Central Florida, the citrus industry and our state's entire economy will benefit."

Coca-Cola has played an active role in the Florida citrus industry since purchasing Minute Maid® in 1960. Today, the Company operates 26 facilities in Florida, employing 6,100 associates. Over the last five years, The Coca-Cola Company has invested more than $400 million in its operations throughout the state. Most recently, the Auburndale facility, which produces Simply® juices, underwent a significant expansion. Adding a new production line and increased warehouse space, this multi-million dollar project created 129 new jobs, bringing the total number of facility employees to more than 500.

"The Coca-Cola Company is proud to be part of this investment in Florida and its citrus industry. A thriving Florida citrus industry is critical to helping us build our Simply and Minute Maid juice brands," said Steve Cahillane, President, Coca-Cola Americas. "Through viable partnerships and meaningful investment with Cutrale and Peace River, we together will foster sustainable, responsible growth in Florida. This is good news for the state's citrus industry, our business and the communities we serve."

The Coca-Cola Company is the leading marketer of fruit juices and drinks in the United States and globally. In the U.S., the Minute Maid and Simply brands offer more than 100 different varieties, including low-calorie options. In partnership with Cutrale Citrus Juices, Coca-Cola purchases nearly a third of all Florida oranges grown by more than 400 local growers. The Company continues to expand its juice offerings, in both the Minute Maid and Simply brand portfolios, to provide people with great-tasting, high quality juices and juice drinks.

“Coca-Cola’s commitment to purchase all of the fruit from the new groves enables us to play a role in helping restore Florida’s citrus industry with the largest planting of orange trees in 25 years,” said Jose Luis Cutrale, Chief Executive Officer of Cutrale Citrus Juices.

Sustainable Agriculture

The Coca-Cola Company encourages its partners to use sustainable, responsible agricultural management practices. Initiatives that reduce the amount of pesticides and fertilizers and the volume of water used to grow crops limit the impact on local communities. For this citrus planting project, Cutrale and Peace River will implement agricultural practices that lessen the use of local water resources. For example, they will capture and reuse rainwater for irrigation. Peace River will also utilize a high-efficiency, micro-jet irrigation system that requires 50 percent less groundwater. Cutrale will employ water efficiency methods and help control water use through a soil moisture monitoring process.

“Water is one of our most precious natural resources and we are committed to leveraging technology to help us implement sustainable agricultural practices throughout our groves,” said Bill Becker, President of Peace River Citrus Products.

In 2010, The Coca-Cola Company and Cutrale Citrus Juices pledged $1.5 million each to the University of Florida’s Citrus Research and Development Foundation. This grant furthers critical research to help address Huanglongbing disease, commonly known as citrus greening.

About The Coca-Cola Company

The Coca-Cola Company (NYSE: KO) is the world's largest beverage company, refreshing consumers with more than 500 sparkling and still brands. Led by Coca-Cola, the world's most valuable brand, our Company's portfolio features 16 billion-dollar brands including Diet Coke, Fanta, Sprite, Coca-Cola Zero, vitaminwater, Powerade, Minute Maid, Simply, Georgia and Del Valle. Globally, we are the No. 1 provider of sparkling beverages, ready-to-drink coffees, and juices and juice drinks. Through the world's largest beverage distribution system, consumers in more than 200 countries enjoy our beverages at a rate of more than 1.8 billion servings a day. With an enduring commitment to building sustainable communities, our Company is focused on initiatives that reduce our environmental footprint, support active, healthy living, create a safe, inclusive work environment for our associates, and enhance the economic development of the communities where we operate. Together with our bottling partners, we rank among the world's top 10 private employers with more than 700,000 system associates. For more information, visit Coca-Cola Journey at www.coca-colacompany.com, follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/CocaColaCo or check out our blog, Coca-Cola Unbottled, at www.coca-colablog.com.

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